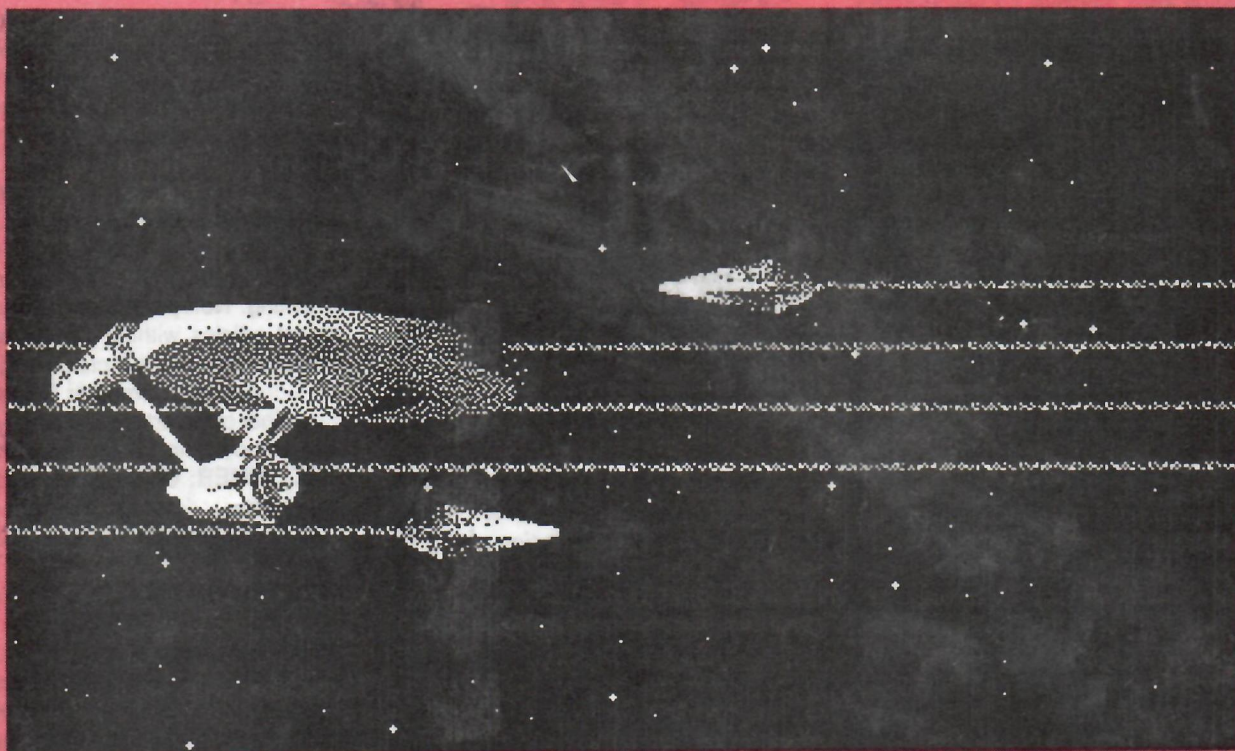




Volume 12 Number 3  
Fall, 1993

# *Computer* **Quarterly**

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**Inside — “Software I just can’t live without”**

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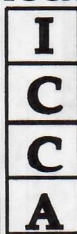
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# Computer Quarterly

Volume 12 Number 3  
Fall, 1993

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## Inside Highlights

### Focus - Software I Can't Live Without

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**Cover photo: Screen shot from, Star Trek: The Screen Saver.**

# Viewpoint

## Me – a quota queen?

When I began searching for writers for this issue, I jotted down names of people I would call the next day. In thinking back, the list consisted of males and females. At that point, though, I didn't think about it in those terms. The names represented people I knew, either by knowing them over the years, or meeting them on various occasions. They were people I felt could write interesting articles which would somehow benefit CCS readers.

When it came time to make the calls, I got the usual responses – yes, or reasons why they couldn't. The first four who said yes were men. Those who said no were women.

The reasons why they couldn't write were quite reasonable. Several were away or about to go away (one I reached would have loved to write about her favorite software, but was going overseas to see her grandchild for the first time). A few others, though, returned my call to explain that while they use computers regularly, they could not honestly say they liked any particular package they use in a way that

would cover the topic of software they can't live without.

Why was it easier for men to come up with software they liked very much, and not women. Is it a matter of numbers? That there are many more men using computers than there are women, and therefore it was easier for me to get men to write?

Beats me.

The next list I came up with consisted of women only, this time I included women who have written for CCS before. As I called Ricki Letowt, I chuckled remembering how a number of readers had believed Ricki was a man. Oh well, we fixed that by including her photo – a definite female. I then called Gillian Oechslin. Both said yes without hesitation; both have written for CCS before, and while I usually don't like to constantly ask the same people to write, I was thrilled they agreed to take time from their busy schedules to write for CCS.

Others I called, couldn't write. So, I went through old membership forms, pulling out those with women's names. I called them up – heard what I heard before – no software they can't live without.

Now, you might be asking – who cares who writes the articles as long as they are somehow helpful?

If you ask that, you're right. I suppose it really doesn't matter. I still need a few more articles, and will attempt to get them any way I can.

But...for those who want to help me get a jump on the winter issue, and who want to have a little fun, consider writing for the next focus topic: software I hate (or don't

like using) but have to use (for work, home, where ever). Just give me a call at 233-4141; if I'm not here, leave a message after the beep.

## Gift giving time already?

OK – so it's only the Fall of 1993, but soon, it will be the winter, a time when people tend to give and receive gifts. Did it occur to you that maybe – perhaps – someone you know might be interested in receiving the CCS Quarterly?

Hadn't given it a thought, huh? Well, how about this; you join or renew at the regular price, and give the gift membership for \$5 (or \$10 for two years). Did you recently (within the last 6 months) join or renew? Then give a gift membership at the regular price for one year, but the recipient will get two years of membership; a gift membership for 2 years will get 4 years. But, this is only for CCS members who recently joined or renewed.

When you send in your renewal or new membership, write the name, address and if possible, the phone number of the person who is to receive the gift membership. I will send a letter to the person indicating the gift, and who did the giving. It will be sent by any date the giver requests. Just let me know.

Until next time...

-Karen Eisenstein

## Next issue

**Focus** – Software people hate (dislike) but have to use for particular tasks, or because the boss or client tells them to use it. Some software programs do have various aspects which are great, while others are not so great. How about the manuals that go with the programs. Great programs can be ruined by bad documentation. Who is using what software, being frustrated by what programs? We'll read about it in the Winter, 1994 issue of the Quarterly.

**Who is** going to win Quicken, a well-known and popular program. Only CCS members with up-to-date memberships are eligible for the selection.

**Richard Rosengrant** of Plantsville won Windows. Call the CCS office before November 15 to claim your prize.

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# ***“Software I can’t live without”***

**“Software I can’t live without?”**

Come on. Except for the basics, average people manage daily to live without a whole lot of things.

“Average” people, though, are not necessarily computer users. Avid computer users are people who seem to have a special respect for computers as fantastic tools. The software is an intricate set of commands developed by someone or a team of programmers who know exactly how to allow their software to become the very thing that makes computers into “fantastic tools.”

There’s a whole lot of amazing software out in the world, some we’ve all

heard of because of advertising campaigns that work—many non computer users have heard of Lotus, dBase and a few others.

But there are thousands of software packages that relatively few have heard of. Their names may be passed along by word of mouth, or through local newsletters across the state—and country.

Heavy duty computer users have seen many a package, some they like, some they don’t. One, or possibly several, are packages that they would rather not live (work) without. Which ones are they? How does one judge a new software package? Read on.



---

## ***Buying software***

# **Old answer to an old question**

by Bruce Brown

Whether you’re looking for your first piece of software, a version upgrade to an existing program, or a crossover to a new brand, whenever you buy software you want it to solve problems better than your current solutions. Sometimes it’s hard to be realistic in the search for software; when you want a total and perfect solution often you have to settle for incremental improvement, such as a better user interface, more functions, or perhaps more fonts and document publishing features.

Ease of use, speed, power (meaning features and functions) and capacity count a lot with software. We want all four attributes in any computer product including software and often we can have only one or two, often at the expense of the other qualities. Added features take up drive space and often result in cluttered menus. Fancy user interfaces and graphic mode programs look great but put great

demands on system resources like memory, processors, and drive space; that’s why graphical interface programs run much slower than text-based applications. New programs or major upgrades seldom successfully improve usability, functionality, speed, and capacity at the same levels.

It sure would be easier if one program could meet all your needs, but it doesn’t happen unless your needs are very basic. No one type of software is good for all tasks. Spreadsheets, word processors, database managers, graphics, communications, and desktop publishing programs all have their special strengths. There is often some overlap between software categories, such as a communications or database program with a rudimentary text editor or a word processor with simple arithmetic capabilities, but the out-of-genre features are almost always relatively primitive and often awkward to use.

In the mid-80’s there was a lot of noise about high-end integrated programs that

covered all the major application areas, but none of these attempts was successful, suffering either from unbalanced feature sets or from difficulty of use because of size and complexity. The only integrated programs with lasting success were low-end integrated programs, which still meet the needs of many users who are wise enough to settle for moderate functionality but gain ease of use.

Even in a single application category there’s no such thing as one program that’s best for all people. So-called “mainstream users” might be happy with the most popular full-featured word processing programs (although most use only a fraction of any program’s features), but many people’s needs aren’t met by typical programs. Some people want very simple functionality with high ease of use and others want basic functions and minimal interface niceties, preferring to conserve

Continue on next page



disk space. Still others have special needs not adequately addressed by popular programs, for example people who need to type using a variety of alphabets or to include a lot of scientific and mathematic notation in their documents. If one program tried to accommodate all possible features the resultant software would be large, slow, and confusing. Software "bloat" is the current term used to describe programs over-stuffed with features.

Computer magazines need to take

some responsibility for software bloat, incidentally, since product comparison reviews usually contain feature charts. Feature charts are helpful for readers who want to compare programs, but vendors hate to have empty feature boxes, so whenever they get them you can bet that the program's next version will add the missing features, whether the program benefits much or not.

The upshot of the variety of software is that you as a purchaser should first answer the usual tough question about any computer related purchase, "What do you

want to use it for?" whenever considering a new software purchase. If you prioritize your needs and remember them you'll be better equipped to resist programs with interesting snazzy features unrelated to your needs; you may even find that a prioritized feature and function list will help you resist being turned by a pretty interface.

*Bruce Brown is founder of Connecticut Computer Society who now writes reviews for nationally distributed computer magazines.*

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# CCS Holiday gift ideas - 1993

by Mark Frydenberg

This year I combine the theme of this issue along with a CCS holiday-time tradition, to present the 1993 top-ten Gift List of Software Packages You Can't Live Without. Actually, a more correct title would be "software packages you have lived without for a long time and would like to have, but don't want to buy with your own money. While I have actually lived without all of these programs, and including them in this article does not imply endorsement by myself or CCS, I searched the computer stores and suspect that if I owned any of these, after a week, I'd be hooked. For all of these reasons, they'll make great gifts, and will maybe even give you some ideas.

10. The Talking Moose. Definately one of the most useful software packages out, people who are lonely and in search of company when working on their computers will appreciate when the animated moose or one of his pals greets them. An animated figure appears on the screen, and you can have it say "hello" at startup, "goodbye" at shutdown, and maybe even throw in some other tidbits of useful advice along the way when you least expect them. It can also speak Menu Selections that you choose, names of windows that you open, and say the contents of other dialog boxes and menus. You can choose

from among ten different moose-like and other characters to pop up on the screen, and select their colors. \$19.90.

9. Accu-Weather Forecaster. Move over Hilton Kaderli, as you log in to the country's largest on-line weather service. Create your own customized weather maps. Obtain hourly updated weather forecasts, satellite maps, and more. \$19.90.

8. Kidz Mouse. Not really software, but it's a mouse that looks like a mouse, whose ears are the mouse buttons. It has all the precision of a "grown up" mouse, but in a size and shape that's designed for kids' small hands. Made by Logitech, \$49.90.

7. Will Maker. This isn't software to live without, as much as it is software you wouldn't want to die without. Provide for family, friends, and charities. From Nolo Software, Will Maker has on-line legal help, and leads you through a series of questions, lets you select an executor, and produces a will that is valid under the laws of the state in which you live. \$34.95.

6. Kodak's MACphotographer. This program is a camera simulator which lets you try various settings to take a picture, without wasting film or waiting for developing. Choose a scene, set the camera, and press the space bar to take the picture. Once you're done, choose "develop" and the computer displays the photographs

you've taken. A great way to work on composition, exposure. Also available for PC Compatibles. Order from Kodak, 1-800-233-1650.

5. Clinton: Portrait of Victory, the CD ROM. Lots of books are out on CD ROM this year, and for \$17.99 you can be the proud owner of the story behind the 1992 Presidential campaign, complete with music, graphics, and digital photographs. Yet another software package we just cannot live without.

4. Home Alone 2: Lost in New York. The Video Game. Kevin MacCalister got lost in New York, and you will get lost in front of your computer screen, with this entertaining program. Search the Plaza Hotel, cause trouble in Central Park, and check out the toys in the toy store. Graphics and fast action all contribute to the excitement of this game. \$30.00.

3. LandDesigner. This program from Green Thumb Software (800-336-3127) brings homeowners the opportunity to landscape their yards without getting dirty hands. Add grass, plants, walkways, and fountains for areas up to 170 acres. LandDesigner is one of the latest entries in computer-aided design CAD applications for personal computers. \$89.00.

2. Goto Foods On Disk. In terms of culinary software, this package lets you get a different byte from your computer, as you navigate menus of menus in search of



# Software for daily use

by Ricki Letowt

In 1989 I was writing a regular column for CCS News and frequently reviewed software. I got a call from Neil Friend of JNF Associates asking me if I would like an evaluation copy of his program "ADate."

I got it and have used it almost every day since.

"ADate" is a very simple calendar/scheduler program (priced at \$33.00 at the time) that I have on my autoexec on two machines. This program allows me to enter repetitive events (weekly, monthly, annually, etc.) and one-time events

(which I can leave active until I do them and/or put them on a history file when done).

So, how do I use this program daily?

On my office administrators machine I have scheduled regular occurring office events: do weekly backups, quarterly sales and payroll taxes due, take the trash out, etc.

On my machine I have people's birthdays and, more important, reminders of all my various scheduled events: ICCA Board meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, the chapter meeting on the 4th Wednesday, etc.

I can set how many days ahead I want to



Continued on Page 8

## Gifts '93 continued

formal dinners, buffets, and meals that you can cook in less than an hour. Print up shopping lists of ingredients, preparation instructions, and more. Available for Macs and PC's, from GOTO FOODS, 2205 HillTop Dr. Suite 2000, Redding CA 96002. \$14.95 + \$2.50 s&h.

1. Star Trek: The Screen Saver. You'll be in deep space nine without this program, which beams out images from the TV series that has become a part of our culture. Trekkies will be glad to prevent burn-in on their monitors with this program that displays high resolution images of Captain Kirk, the Enterprise, the crew members, and "Tribbles" from the famous episode. Available for the Macintosh at \$37.95, from Berkeley Systems. And for \$14.95 more, you can buy a matching mouse pad from Tiger Software (800-888 4437).

Makes me wonder how I've survived without this stuff for all these years.

Mark Frydenberg likes to suggest how other people spend their money. This has been an annual CCS feature since 1984.

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be reminded of the event, so for birthdays I might set it to 5 or 10 days ahead to give me time to get the gift/card and get it in the mail; for tax reports due I have it set to start reminding me 20 days ahead to give me time to do all the paper work.

It has a perpetual calendar built in which

unfortunately considers 2000 a leap year (which it's not) so I will have to stop using the program then—Neil, are you going to update "ADate" by then?

As a consultant I bought many copies to re-sell to my clients (I still have a couple). One client faithfully uses it (I put it on his autoexec too) for his to-do list. He has it set up so that an item stays on until he does it. It reminds—but it never nags. Another client used it for project scheduling. By

putting his target dates in, he can watch how close to schedule he is. He keeps the history of completed events.

I gave it a very favorable review in my column in 1989 and obviously still would.

*Ricki Letowt, president of Letowt Associates, Inc. in Norwalk, and publisher of Letowt on Computing, uses her 30 years of DP experience to work with small businesses starting with computers.*

---

# Software to do it all - almost

by Jerry Dill

Where does one start with favorite programs, anyway? There are so many programs of all types out there that such a choice seems hard to make.

I can eliminate games, as I really not a game player. And I can eliminate applications, because no matter what application you talk about, there is another program some place that will do the same thing maybe a little better.

Rather than eliminate all of the types of programs one at a time, I will admit that there is a utility or two that will fit the bill for "my favorite software." It's not, of course, that I can't live without them, but I would rather not.

First, there is a small program called Sorted Directory (SD). No more do my eye balls roll around like loose marbles when I want to see what is on a disk. No longer do I have to sit here with my hands poised over the pause key, hoping beyond hope that I can smack it hard enough and quick enough to keep my directory from rolling off the screen.

I will never again have to remember the /p flag to make sure the bloody thing stops. Gone are the days of the /w flag and then trying to find my file when the alphabet is all mixed up. I just type SD and sit back and read the directory with detachment. Not only is it alphabetized by program name; not only does the directory come up in two

columns, or 4 or 6 as I wish; not only does the screen NOT scroll until I tell it to, but it is color coded. Each type of program has its own color according to the extension. All .TXT and .DOC files are cyan, for instance. Archived programs are brown. All executable programs are . . . Well, you get the picture.

When I sit down in front of a different computer, I am all thumbs. And they can't type! I have even gone so far as to take along a disk of my own short utilities to install on a computer I am working on, just so I don't look like too great an idiot. Best of all, the program (and several more like it) are freeware and can be found on most BBSs. At least the good ones.

My next offering of programs I can't live without is a DOS command (external) that can be found on all 3.3 or later DOS setups. It's DOSKEY. I know you have seen it in your DOS directory, and probably you have wondered about it. Well wonder no longer. Install it in your AUTOEXEC.BAT batch file. The program is actually a command line history program. Yep. It remembers for you what command line commands you have issued and will replay them or let you change them and then run them.

Now that doesn't seem like too much, just remembering a small command or two, but when you are doing a particular job and your command line goes its full 127 Kb, you just try remembering what

was in the command! Push the PgUp key and you can go through your commands from the beginning. Or the PgDn key starts you off with your last command and lets you back track to find the one you want.

Normally, just using the up arrow key lets you back through the commands in reverse order in which they were given. But even better than the DOSKEY command is one called Stacker (has nothing to do with the disk-doubler program known as Stak). Stacker is not only a command history program, it lets you set your Function keys as macros. Fifteen altogether, using F1 through f10 and the Shift F1 through Shift F5.

I am one of those odd people who think that a computer should do just about every thing for you, including automatically calling up your most used commands. You can put any macro on each key (up to 127 characters per key) to automate your keyboard. Now that's lazy for you!

But my computer is more useful than your computer, just with the addition of a couple very small utilities I can make my work more fun and quicker, too. More time for reviews on programs, and if I liked them, more time to play games.

*Jerry Dill is the editor of BUSS, the newsletter of the user group, NECTCUG; he is also probably, the CCS member who has celebrated more birthdays (93) than any other CCS member.*



# Soften DOS complaints

by Gillian Oechslin

For those of us computing in the DOS-based world, some knowledge of DOS commands is essential. While it is simple enough to type COPY at the C prompt (C:\>), the rest of the required "syntax" is very particular. (If you've ever wondered, syntax means the way words are put together — I had to look that up to satisfy myself when I first entered the computing world!) If you forget the colon (:) after the drive letter or the dreaded backslash (\), the familiar "bad command or filename" appears. (Correct example: COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT A:)

Windows was supposed to make these tasks easier, and once you get over the intimidation factor of all of those "windows" on top of "windows," it is a bit easier. However, until you get to know Windows intimately, it can be just as easy to goof up,

sometimes rather tragically. While I've grown used to the File Manager feature of Windows to perform the old utilitarian tasks of DOS, I still go back to my old DOS-Shell friend because of its simplicity.

About seven or more years ago (time sure flies!), a practical co-worker recommended a DOS-Shell utility software package called "Pathminder" when I complained about DOS. It turned out to be one of the best recommendations I've ever received regarding computer software. In fact, I still use it today in my five year old software development business.

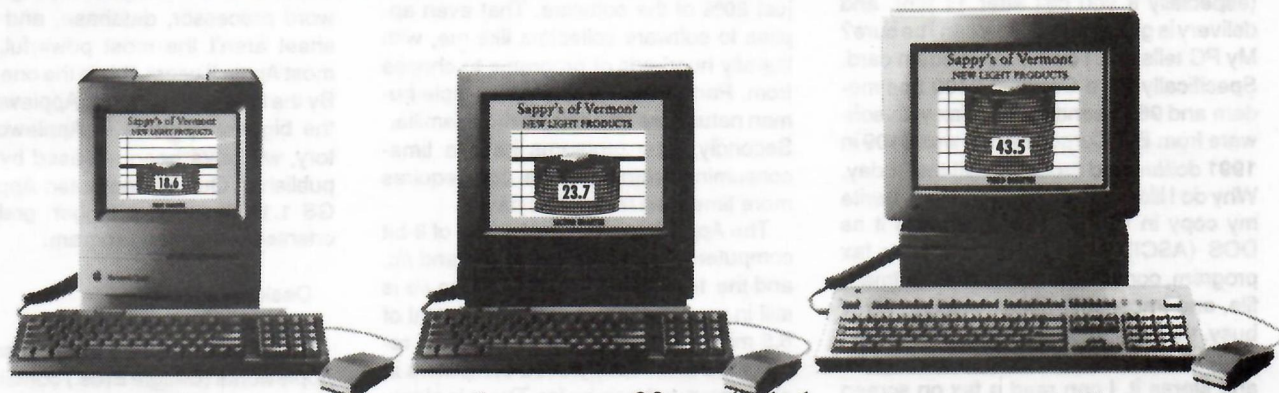
"Pathminder" by Westlake Data Corporation is a DOS shell that has a very simple approach. It is all contained on one floppy disk that I can take to a client site to perform the basics, like viewing drives, directories and the files under each. The all-in-one screen shows memory status and disk space used and available on any drive, including LANs. I much prefer see-

ing all of this information at my fingertips to typing CHKDSK at the DOS prompt. Basic DOS tasks, like renaming directories and files, moving, copying, printing text files, editing files, changing file attributes, etc. are very straightforward.

I still use an old version (5 years) because, ironically, the more recent versions of "Pathminder+" look very busy and more cumbersome. There are some nice features to the newer version though, like memory status over the initial 640K, string searches in all file types when you can't remember which file you saved that all-important information, a communications feature to utilize your modem and, of course, mouse capability.

Yes, my Windows-finesse improves each day, but I still resort to my old and trusted friend to get the job done!

*Gillian Oeschlin is president of Prompt, Inc. of Tariffville.*



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# There's nothing like the fax

by Charles Gagliardi

To be essential, as opposed to merely functional, software must perform some task critical to my business. For example, calendar programs are nice. But I didn't spend thousands of dollars for a computer to replace the paper-based, portable scheduler I buy each year in an office supply store for \$3.95. I want my computer and software to do things I cannot do on my own. I'm a writer. I use a word processor, but I could just as easily use a yellow legal pad and a pencil. For years I did just that. Word processors make editing easier. My clients like to review my copy usually several times – before they're satisfied and pay me. I used to mail written copy or hand deliver it. Sometime I used an overnight service (reasonable) or messenger delivery (expensive). Recently, I've been using a fax. Fast, inexpensive (especially if you call after 11 pm), and delivery is guaranteed. How can I be sure? My PC tells me. I own a fax/modem card. Specifically it's a Cardinal 2400 bps modem and 9600 send/receive fax with software from BIT Corporation. It was \$109 in 1991 dollars and probably half that today. Why do I like it? Easy to send a fax. I write my copy in WordPerfect and save it as DOS (ASCII) text. Then I start my fax program, convert the text to a fax (bitmap) file, and transmit it. If the receiving fax is busy, the computer redials automatically. Easy to get a fax. The computer receives and stores it. I can read a fax on screen and, if necessary, print it real paper, not the thermal curly stuff. Also, you don't run out of paper in the middle of a fax reception. (This happened to me in the old days when I was still using a conventional fax machine.) Fast. I can convert and transmit two pages in the time it takes my laser printer to warm up – about 90 seconds. Certain delivery. The program displays messages like "Negotiating", "Transmitting", and "Complete". On occasion fax machines will misfeed. One page either jams or passes through unread. On sev-

eral occasions, a client would call me to report the missing page. There is one additional benefit to having a fax card in a computer. As I mentioned earlier, I have a standalone fax phone which I still use. Like many individuals with an in-home office, I have two phone lines one for personal use and one for business. When I need to scan an image into my PC, I unplug my home phone and run a wire from my office fax phone to my home phone jack. Then I call my business number. My PC answers and I can fax an image into my computer.

The incoming image is a TIFF file, which the software can convert into a PCX file. I can import it into paint program to edit and clean the image. In WordPerfect, I can scale and rotate the image as well as incorporate it with text. The image shown was fax-scanned into my PC and scaled with WordPerfect.

*Charles Gagliardi, president of Electronic Pencil in West Hartford, is a writer who specializes in computers and technology.*

## For Apple II users

by Rich Leventhal

Every computer user follows the old "80-20 rule," whether they realize it or not; 80% of our computer usage occurs using just 20% of the software. That even applies to software collectors like me, with literally hundreds of programs to choose from. Part of that comes from simple human nature, we use what is most familiar. Secondly, new programs have a time-consuming learning curve that requires more time than most of us have.

The Apple II world is composed of 8-bit computers, the Apple II Plus, IIe and IIc, and the 16-bit Apple IIGS. Only the IIe is still in production, but there are a total of 6.5 million Apple IIs in use, and they remain the most widely used computers in elementary schools by far. There is plenty of software available in education, games, business, and productivity, and new programs are published frequently. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. But walk-in retail sources have dried up, most commercial software is sold by mail order. Online services, such as Genie, CompuServe, America Online and Delphi are also terrific sources of programs and information. (Prodigy does not support the Apple II.)

The following are some of my favorite programs, divided by use: (I really do use all of these.)

### Integrated Programs:

Appleworks 3.0 (Clariscorp.) is the standard that spawned all other Macintosh and MS-DOS integrated software. Like all integrated programs, its word processor, database, and spreadsheet aren't the most powerful, but for most Apple II users, this is the one to have. By the time you read this, Appleworks 4.0, the biggest upgrade in Appleworks history, will have been released by its new publisher, Quality Computer. Appleworks GS 1.1 (Clariscorp.) is a bigger, graphically-oriented integrated program.

### Desk Accessories:

The Timeout series of accessories for Appleworks (Beagle Bros.) contains more than 60 different pop up programs. My favorites are, Timeout Graph, for the Appleworks spreadsheet; Timeout Sidespread, for long, long spreadsheet printouts; Timeout Telecom, a full-fledged communications program right inside Appleworks; Timeout Filemaster, complete disk and file utilities; and Timeout Superfonts, for terrific Appleworks printouts.

### Utilities:

Copy II Plus (Central Point Software), and Prosel 8 and 16 (Glen Bredon) are the



most complete. They duplicate, analyze, organize, diagnose and (with Prosel), repair with the best.

#### Duplication Programs:

Beside the two above, Diversicopy 4.0 and Digicopy (both shareware) for the //e, //c and IIGS, respectively, are fast and easy. Photonix (freeware) for the GS treats you to a sight-and-sound fest while speeding your disk copying.

#### Hard Drive Management:

Easy-Drive (Quality Computers) for 8-bit Apples, shows you everything you need, including graphical displays of how much space is left (never enough). It has all the utilities you'll ever need, including compression backup and restore. Salvation Supreme (Vitesse) for the GS repairs hard drives, optimizes, cures viruses, backs up and manages beautifully. Auto Ark (Econ Technologies) will double your hard drive storage capacity via on-the-fly compression/decompression of data.

#### Desktop Publishing:

Publish It! 4 (Timeworks) for the //e, //c, GS is the hands-down winner in usage. Most Apple II newsletters are written with it, followed close behind by Graphicwriter III for the GS, which is also a full-fledged word processor. Both support inkjet and Postscript-compatible laser printers.

#### Finance:

Quicken 1.0 (Intuit) is an easy and fast checkbook balance and budgeter, while Managing Your Money 5.0 (MECA) will analyze your entire portfolio. There are numerous public domain checkbook balancers available.

#### Communications:

Proterm 3.1 (InTrec) is the standard by which all other communications programs, no matter what computer type you use, are judged. It's easier, more complete, and faster, than any Mac or MS-DOS program I've ever seen. When you've downloaded files from an online service or private bulletin board, you'll need to unpack them. Shrinkit 3.4 and Shrinkit GS are the standards used throughout the Apple II community (both public domain).

#### Design:

The New Printshop and Printshop GS (Broderbund) are the prototypes and still the best for cards, posters and banners. For fancy labels complete with graphics, merge your database with Labels, Labels, Labels (Big Red Computer Club). Accu-Draw is a professional-level draft and design program (Kitchen Sink Software) that compares favorably with most CAD programs. Less sophisticated but easier is the Design Your Own series (Abracadata) for interiors, landscaping, architecture and railroads. Platinum Paint 2.0 (Beagle Bros.) is as good as a paint program gets, whatever the platform. SuperConvert (Seven Hills) will convert graphics from any other computer format into any IIGS format, great for those downloaded pictures.

#### Hypermedia:

Hyperstudio (Roger Wagner) combines super hi-res graphics, sound and text into terrific presentations. Numerous commercial and public domain hypermedia "stacks" are available.

#### Fun:

My idea of fun is an intellectual chal-

lenge, with an occasional shoot-um-up. My choices are, Scrabble (Leisure Genius), Video Vegas (Hacker Jack), Tetris (Spectrum Holobyte), and Chessmaster 2100 (Software Toolworks). Golfers will enjoy the variety of courses in Mean 18 (Quality). The all-time classic Defender is now in the public domain.

#### Early Learning:

McGee, McGee at the Fun Fair, and Katie's Farm (Lawrence Productions) will delight pre-schoolers. Great graphics, sounds and new worlds to explore. Don't forget the Treehouse (Broderbund).

#### Education:

The Carmen Sandiego series (all Broderbund) and Oregon Trail, Number Munchers and Word Munchers (MECC) top my list, followed close behind by Math Blaster Mystery (Davidson). Mavis Bacon Teaches Typing (Software Toolworks) is unsurpassed. Crossword Magic 4.0 (Mindscape) is the best there is for teachers and parents.

*Rich Leventhal is a newsletter editor for The Apple Tree, published by the APPLESHARE User Group in Westport.*

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# Managing WP users forum

by Guerri F. Stevens

I am a staff member (Sysop) on the WordPerfect Users forum (WPUSERS) on CompuServe. The WPUSERS forum's purpose is the support of software products developed by WordPerfect Corporation, such as the various versions of the WordPerfect word processing program, Office, DataPerfect, and all other WordPerfect Corporation products.

CompuServe forums have three main areas. The message area is similar to a Bulletin Board Service (BBS). Forum libraries contain files that members can download. The conference area lets members converse with others who are actually present at the same time.

My primary jobs as a staff member are to manage the message and library areas. Message management means reading all messages posted each day, answering questions, helping to solve problems, making sure messages are in appropriate form sections based on the topic of discussion, forwarding incorrectly-addressed messages, changing message titles to agree with the actual topic of discussion when the conversation has wandered away from the original subject. Library management consists of checking files uploaded by members, creating catalogues of available files, and deleting obsolete files from the libraries.

The software I can't live without is a collection of programs that I use in performing various forum tasks: TAPCIS, WordPerfect Office 3.1 and OS/2.

The Access Program for the CompuServe Information Service (TAPCIS) is a program created specifically for using CompuServe forums. TAPCIS makes it easy to use the CompuServe forums and saves money for its users by automating the process of reading and replying to messages and downloading files.

I use TAPCIS to read forum messages and do most of my message management tasks. A special Sysop version of TAPCIS provides commands for deleting, forwarding, moving and retitling forum messages. TAPCIS supports an address book where

I keep the names and User Id's of other forum staff members, WordPerfect Corporation employees who participate in the forum, and various other people with whom I regularly exchange messages. TAPCIS makes it easy for me to address or forward messages just by typing a few characters of the recipient's name; TAPCIS will search the address book, and let me choose from a list of people that match.

WordPerfect Office 3.1 is a collection of programs: Calendar, Calculator, Editor, File Manager, Notebook, Shell, TSR Manager. The ones I use most for my forum activities are the Shell, File Manager (FM), and Editor (ED).

Shell is a DOS task swapper and menu application with a powerful macro language and a screen copy and clipboard feature. I make heavy use of Shell macros when writing messages for the forum. I've written a group of simple macros that write the exact names of the WPUSERS forum message and library sections, the names of sections in other forums commonly accessed by WPUSERS members and frequently needed WordPerfect Corporation phone numbers. Other macros provide short paragraphs that I can incorporate in messages describing such things as handling compressed library files or the location of the WordPerfect printer files. I've written still other macros to issue specific commands while I'm on-line, saving me the trouble of remembering the exact syntax of CompuServe commands. To give myself quick access to older forum messages, I keep messages on my hard drive for two weeks. At the end of each day, I run a Shell macro to archive the day's messages by renaming the message file using sequential numbers.

The File Manager, FM is a general-purpose file management utility. Besides the usual copy, move, and rename functions, FM can search files and directories for information and can launch applications. When replying to forum messages, I use FM to locate information, such as library file names, a member's name and User Id from archived message files, or product information. Once I've located the information, I use the Shell screen copy feature to put it into the clipboard, then I

swap back to TAPCIS to paste the information into the message I'm writing.

FM's program launch feature is very handy for processing files for the forum libraries. Many files are compressed; I've set up FM so that I can highlight a compressed file and press one key to view the contents, or a different key to unpack it into its component parts. For executable programs, FM will launch the virus scanner with the touch of a single key.

I use the Editor (ED) when processing files uploaded to the forum libraries. Once a file has been checked, I use ED to modify the file's external description, title and key words, if necessary, to conform to the forum standards. ED, like WordPerfect and Shell, has a powerful macro language. I use ED macros to automatically extract and reformat the file description from the information retrieved from the library. When I have modified the description, another ED macro will count the characters to make sure that I haven't exceeded the maximum allowed. Still another ED macro inserts the commands that tell the CompuServe editor to replace the existing file description with the modified version.

Last, but very important: OS/2, the operating system. OS/2 lets me run Shell as a DOS application, and Shell lets me swap quickly back and forth among the other applications I've mentioned. OS/2 gives me the flexibility to switch just as easily between Shell, running as a DOS session, and Windows. So I can read forum messages, swap to WordPerfect Corporation DOS applications to experiment and check on features, and switch to Windows and run WordPerfect's Windows applications.

You can order TAPCIS from The Support Group, Inc., (800) 872-4768 or (301) 387-4500, \$79.00.

You can order WordPerfect Office 3.1 for DOS from WordPerfect Corporation, (800) 321-4566 or (801) 226-6800. The suggested retail price for the standalone PC version is \$149.

*Guerri Stevens, an independent computer consultant, owns and operates Stevens Software Solutions, Inc. in Glastonbury, Connecticut.*



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# Great software for small unique business

by Patricia Caputo

"What on earth do we need a computer for?"

That was my reaction when my husband told me he wanted to purchase a personal computer for our home.

After months of reading and research, he purchased an IBM compatible personal computer.

Then one day he convinced me to come down and just look at what it could do. The computer came programmed with a word processing program called Word Publish by Spinnaker. I have always done a lot of writing for PECOS, a child support advocacy group which I co-founded. I thought I was pretty hi-tech when I made the switch from a manual to an electric typewriter. Boy, was I impressed when I saw words scooting around on the monitor with just a touch of a key, rather than retyping a whole paragraph.

Word Publish has remained one of my favorite programs. Although it is not as well known as many other word processing programs, on the market, it has many of the same features, and is very easy to learn. I use it for all my informational and fact sheets for PECOS. It contains an outliner, thesaurus, spell check, word count; can draw lines, boxes, import graphics, merge.

My husband also introduced me to a program called Managing Your Money. He has kept track of all of our financial records, check book, assets, liabilities, and even prepared our income taxes with the aid of this program. It also features a great desk top calendar feature complete with "To Do" list. MYM has a card file in which I keep my many assorted mailing lists, the fields for the data base are already defined, unlike some other data bases. It also has some word processing capability, which makes mail merge very simple.

I now do short "form" letters in MYM. My mailing lists, personal, business, PECOS, are all coded so they can be sorted in a number of different ways. Within minutes I can print mailing labels or even envelopes. When I think back about how many hours it took to do mailing labels on my electric typewriter!

About five years ago I decided to turn my hobby of quilling (paper filigree), into a full time business. I had been selling my work and doing custom orders on a part time basis for some time. I knew I would be spending a lot more time quilling, but didn't realize how big a role the computer would play. Of course, I kept a mailing list, but I also found the computer wonderful for signs, printed information about my product and for the calligraphy inserts I used in my frames. I purchased a couple of inexpensive programs with clip art for making flyers and mailers; Ben's Printing Press by Owl Software is my favorite of these.

Over the years our use of the computer increased dramatically to the point that we outgrew our first computer. This time he didn't get any argument from me about buying a more powerful computer (with a laser printer); we gave our other computer to our kids. Now we had enough memory to install two more great programs; a desk top publishing program, Publish It, by Timeworks and a spreadsheet, Quattro Pro.

My product line contains more than 100 different items. I now have inventory in eight different shops, most of which are rental shops. Each account is set up on a spread sheet so I can tell at a glance how much inventory there is and which are my best selling items. I print all of my price tags on the computer, as well as point of purchase information, special order forms, promotional flyers and postcards. I also do monthly sales and inventory statements for 65 artists who sell their work at New England Craftsmen in Hartford.

Again, each account is set up on a spreadsheet which automatically calculates sales, rent, and commission for each



artist. The newsletters I write for PECOS, the store and the American branch of The Quilling Guild are all done using Publish It. Advertising flyers, signs, and bag stuffers for the store are done quickly and professionally using Publish It and Word Publish. I have even picked up a couple of small DTP jobs printing invitations, certificates, and programs for the town of Enfield. These have come as a direct result of people seeing what my computer can do.

I keep my books for my business on a very simple book keeping program called Cashbiz, which also does my invoices, and keeps running totals of everything from shipping costs and supplies to the amount of sales tax I have to pay the state. Tax time is not nearly as overwhelming as it used to be.

Not a day goes by that I don't use the computer, and I enjoy every minute. We now have "his and hers" computers and are presently researching software to be used for a child support collection agency which we hope to have up and running before too long.

Is this the same person who asked, "What on earth do we need a computer for?" How did we ever manage without one?

*Patricia Caputo lives in Enfield.*



# "I want to do my pooter"

by Stephanie Jones  
as told to Bill Searle

We got a new 486 machine with new software for me to work with. Since I'm only three years old, my Grampy (OK, Grandpa) is writing this for me. Because this is about my favorite software, it is from my angle.

The programs are shareware games. (Note: Grampy paid to register the programs like your supposed to do.)

The first program is *Preschool Pack*, which comes on two disks. My favorite is like the television show, *Concentration*, but easier. I match pictures of dogs, kids, dinosaurs, beach balls, and neat stuff like that.

When I make a match, my pooter (I really do say "pooter" for computer) plays a short tune. When I match all the squares, a big bumblebee flies across the screen and I hear another song.

Another "*Preschool Pack*" game I like is a counting game. There is a dancing bear on the left of the screen and a number. The pooter tells me the number. Then, every time I click the button on the mouse another picture appears on the screen. When I reach the number the pooter started with, it plays a song and the bear dances. I love to see the bear dance.

The last game that I play is one that matches animals with where I might find them. There are farm animals, circus animals, and animals that are usually pets. An animal appears on the screen,



and I move the mouse so the little arrow is on the barn, circus tent, or home. This game is harder because I have to do too many clicks with the mouse for me to remember. Grampy is going to try to fix that for me.

I'm supposed to tell you how we got these games; we pay \$4.00 per disk to a company called Mr. Disk (5915 Casey Drive, Knoxville, TN 37909). For the \$4 per disk, we get the complete program, with instructions on how to load it into

our pooter (all of the children's programs are one or two disks).

Grampy likes that I like the computer cuz he likes computers. You know how we kids like to imitate big people. Besides, he says it helps to make us kids "computer friendly."

*Bill Searle teaches at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and runs his consulting group; Stephanie loves to play on the computer.*

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